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PALMER et al.

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**REMARKS**

By this Amendment, claim 1 is amended to more clearly describe the present invention and overcome 35 U.S.C. §112 rejections. Claims 4, 5 and 17-24 are canceled. The limitations of dependent claims 4 and 5 have been added to independent claim 1. No new claims are added. *No new matter is added.* Accordingly, claims 1-3 and 6-9 remain pending in the application.

**Claim Rejections – 35 U.S.C. §112**

Pursuant to the Office Action, claim 1 and 17 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which Applicants regard as the invention. Specifically, in claims 1 and 17 “an assembly process” is ambiguous and “field-installable” is not definite.

Applicant has canceled claim 17 and amended claim 1 to delete “an assembly process” and replaced it with “connector assembly” to remove ambiguity. Claim 1 has also been amended to delete “field-installable”. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request the Examiner to withdraw the rejections to the claim 1 under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph.

**Claim Rejections – 35 U.S.C. §102(e)**

Pursuant to the Office Action, claims 1-9 and 17-24 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as being anticipated by Barnes et al. (US 2005/0213890).

Barnes et al. teaches a cam-activated *mechanical splice* fiber optic connector for terminating a fiber optic cable with a connector. The connector of Barnes et al. teaches a housing (16), a ferrule (18), a ferrule holder (20), splice members (26, 28) and a cam (30), among other components. The present invention, in contrast, provides not only connector components, but *other components that are used to assemble the connector* that are needed because it is a fusion splice connector. Claim 1 has been amended to more clearly describe the limitations already presented and does not include limitations that have not already been searched by the Examiner, therefore, Applicant believes that no new matter is introduced that would require an additional search.

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Claim 1 as amended is provided as follows:

- "1. ~~A field-installable fusion-spliced~~ fiber optic connector kit comprising:
- ~~a ferrule block subassembly comprising:~~
    - a fiber optic stub;
    - a ferrule, the ferrule having a longitudinal bore therethrough, wherein the fiber optic stub is held in the longitudinal bore and an end of the fiber optic stub extends beyond the ferrule; and
    - ~~a disposable ferrule handling block, the disposable ferrule handling block adapted for holding for handling the ferrule during an assembly process for a fiber optic connector, and~~ connector assembly;
  - ~~a splice cover handling block subassembly comprising:~~
    - a connector housing for receiving the ferrule therein;
    - a trigger engaged with the connector housing;
    - a crimp body;
    - a spring;
    - a splice cover, the splice cover having a first end and a second end and a longitudinal passage extending from the first end to the second for housing a fusion splice of the fiber optic stub; and
    - ~~a disposable splice cover handling block, wherein the disposable splice cover handling block is adapted for holding for handling the crimp body, the spring, and the splice cover during the assembly process.~~ connector assembly; and
    - wherein the connector is a fusion splice connector;
    - wherein the ferrule handling block is used to assemble the connector and is not part of the connector as assembled; and
    - wherein the splice cover handling block is used to assemble the connector and is not part of the connector as assembled."

The connector kit of the present invention includes a fiber optic stub (22), a ferrule (24), a ferrule handling block (28), a housing (40), a trigger (50), a crimp body (32), a spring (34), a

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splice cover (36) and a splice cover handling block (38). The ferrule handling block (28) is used for "handling the ferrule during connector assembly" and "is not part of the connector as assembled." The splice cover handling block (38) is used for "handling the crimp body, the spring and the splice cover during connector assembly" and "is not part of the connector as assembled." Further, as amended, the connector is a "fusion splice" connector.

In contrast, Barnes et al. teaches a mechanical splice connector that includes a *ferrule holder* (20) that is part of the connector as assembled. The present invention does not include a ferrule holder and the ferrule is held within the splice tube (36) in the assembled connector. Thus, the ferrule handling block (28) is not equivalent to the ferrule holder (20) of Barnes et al., and the ferrule handling block (28) *only* holds the ferrule during connector assembly and is not part of the assembled connector. Barnes et al. does not disclose a splice cover handling block, and further, does not disclose a splice cover. The handling blocks are needed to install a fusion splice connector and are not needed for the mechanical splice connector of Barnes et al. Thus, the claim as more clearly written includes limitations that are not provided in the Barnes et al. reference. Thus, Applicant believes that claim 1 as amended is allowable over Barnes et al. based on the clarification of the claim limitations. Because claims 2, 3 and 6-9 depend from claim 1, these claims are now believed to be allowable as well.

**Claim Rejections – 35 U.S.C. §103**

Pursuant to the Office Action, claims 1-9 and 17-24 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Throckmorton et al. (US 2001/000220). Claims 17-24 have been canceled. Throckmorton et al. is similar to Barnes et al. in that it teaches another *mechanical splice* connector (this time multi-fiber) that includes splice components to compress align mating optical fibers. Throckmorton et al. does not teach or suggest a ferrule handling block (28) used for "handling the ferrule during connector assembly" and "is not part of the connector as assembled" or a splice cover handling block (38) used for "handling the crimp body, the spring and the splice cover during connector assembly" and "is not part of the connector as assembled." Further, as amended, the present invention connector is a "fusion splice" connector.

In contrast, Throckmorton et al. teaches a mechanical splice connector that is already

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assembled and not a kit including connector components *and* components for assembling the connector, namely the ferrule handling block and the splice cover handling block. Thus, the claim as amended and more clearly written includes limitations that are not provided in the Throckmorton et al. reference. Thus, Applicant believes that claim 1 as amended is allowable over Throckmorton et al. based on the clarification of the claim limitations, as well as dependent claims 2, 3 and 6-9 based on their dependent basis.

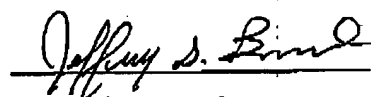
Applicant expressly reserves the right to present additional arguments in support of the patentability of the pending claims 1-3 and 6-9 in the event that the Examiner disagrees with the arguments presented herein.

### CONCLUSION

The presently pending claims 1-3 and 6-9 are now believed to be allowable for at least the reasons stated herein. This response does not include new matter that would require a search and is fully responsive to the Office Action. Accordingly, Applicants submit that the application is now in condition for immediate allowance, and the undersigned respectfully solicits such action on their behalf.

This response does not result in more independent or total claims than paid for previously. Accordingly, no fee for excess claims is due. The Examiner is hereby authorized to charge any other fee due in connection with the filing of this response to Deposit Account No. 19-2167. Any overpayment should be credited to Deposit Account No. 19-2167.

Respectfully submitted,



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